

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 865

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the March 2007 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development makes an important contribution to the understanding of the high levels of crime and violence in the Caribbean, and that the United States should work with Caribbean countries to address crime and violence in the region.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 11, 2007

Ms. CLARKE (for herself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. WATERS, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. HARE, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. SIRES, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. RUSH, Mr. FATTAH, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. ARCURI, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. LEE, Mr. TOWNS, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. ACKERMAN, Ms. WATSON, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. CROWLEY, and Mr. KLEIN of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the March 2007 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development makes an important contribution to the understanding of the high levels of crime and violence in the Caribbean, and that the United

States should work with Caribbean countries to address crime and violence in the region.

Whereas, in his 2006 New Year's address, then Prime Minister of Jamaica, P.J. Patterson, said, "Without a doubt, the high level of violent crime remains our most troubling and pressing problem.";

Whereas, in opening the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago in September 2005, President George Maxwell Richards said his country was in crisis due to the escalating crime rate;

Whereas, in March 2007, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) issued a report entitled, "Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean";

Whereas the UNODC and World Bank report presents detailed analyses of crime and violence in the Caribbean region and offers possible policy responses;

Whereas the UNODC and World Bank report draws on input from governments, civil society organizations, and Caribbean experts;

Whereas the UNODC and World Bank offer the following facts about crime in the Caribbean:

- (1) the Caribbean region has the highest murder and assault rates in the world, with murder rates at 4 times the level of the United States; and
- (2) Trinidad and Tobago doubled its kidnapping rate between 1999 and 2005;

Whereas the UNODC and World Bank report that high crime levels have long term developmental effects on the Caribbean:

(1) crime cost the Jamaican economy \$12,400,000,000 in Jamaican dollars, 3.7 percent of its gross domestic product, in 2001; and

(2) reducing the region-wide homicide rate by  $\frac{1}{3}$  could over double the rate of economic growth per capita; and

Whereas the UNODC and World Bank report reached the following conclusions:

(1) Caribbean countries are transit points and not producers of cocaine. Interdiction needs to be complemented by other strategies outside the region: principally demand reduction in consumer countries and eradication and/or alternative development in producer countries;

(2) expansion of gun ownership and illegal gun trafficking is a dangerous outgrowth of the drug trade. Although reducing gun ownership is difficult, better gun registries, marking, and tracking can help, as can improved gun interdiction in ports. Policies should also focus on limiting the availability of firearms and on providing meaningful alternatives to youth;

(3) deaths and injuries from youth violence constitute a major threat to public health and social and economic progress across the Caribbean. Youth are disproportionately represented in the ranks of both victims and perpetrators of crime and violence;

(4) although the average deportee from the United States to the Caribbean is not involved in criminal activity, a minority of deportees may be causing serious problems, both by direct involvement in crime and by pro-

viding a perverse role model for youth. The report recommends that more services be offered to reintegrate deportees, with departing countries contributing to the cost of these programs;

(5) in general, there is an over-reliance on the criminal justice system to reduce crime in the region, but some types of crime, such as organized crime, and drug and firearms trafficking, are generally impervious to prevention initiatives; their control requires an efficient criminal justice system. Urgent priorities for improving the criminal justice system in the region include: the development of management information systems, tracking of justice system performance, monitoring of reform programs, and increased accountability to citizens;

(6) several Caribbean countries are increasingly investing in crime prevention—using approaches such as integrated citizen security programs, crime prevention through environmental design, and a public health approach that focuses on risk factors for violent behaviors;

(7) youth violence is a particularly serious problem in the region, and youth homicide rates in several countries of the region are significantly above the world average. To address issues of youth violence, Caribbean policymakers should invest in programs that have been shown to be successful in careful evaluations such as: (i) early childhood development and mentoring programs; (ii) interventions to keep high risk youth in secondary schools; and (iii) opening schools after hours and on weekends to offer additional activities and training; and

(8) many of the issues facing the Caribbean transcend national boundaries and require a coordinated regional and international response. Demand for drugs emanates from Europe and the United States; deportees

are sent back to the region from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada; and many weapons that are trafficked are brought from the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) welcomes the recommendations contained in  
3       the March 2007 UNODC and World Bank report,  
4       “Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs,  
5       and Policy Options in the Caribbean”;

6               (2) urges the United States Government to con-  
7       sider fully and carefully the recommendations in the  
8       UNODC and World Bank Report and to take the  
9       recommendations into account when developing  
10      United States policy toward the region;

11              (3) urges the governments of United States and  
12      other drug-consuming countries to increase counter-  
13      narcotics assistance to the Caribbean region;

14              (4) urges the United States Government to in-  
15      crease coordination on policy development and imple-  
16      mentation with Caribbean governments to help com-  
17      bat crime and violence in the region;

18              (5) urges the Department of State and the De-  
19      partment of Homeland Security to work with Carib-  
20      bean governments to mitigate the negative effects of  
21      United States deportation policy; and

1           (6) urges governments of Caribbean countries  
2       to consider fully and carefully the recommendations  
3       in the UNODC and World Bank Report, and to take  
4       the recommendations into account, especially regard-  
5       ing improvements in their criminal justice systems.

